



Creating a Secondary Plan for the South Basin Lake Manitoba Planning Area, Canada

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Contributors

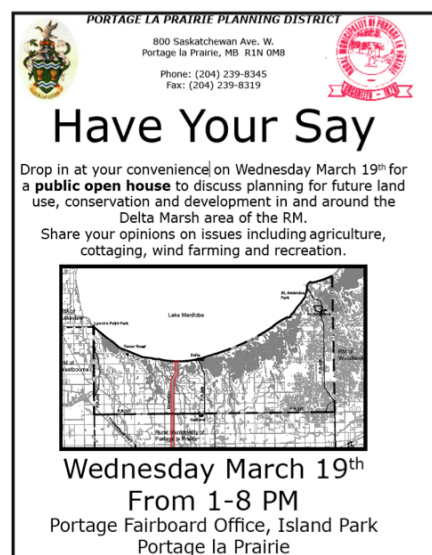
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Key Words

Roman Carousel, Levels of support, Forum, Canada, Civic Engagement, Manitoba, Land Use Planning, Municipal Government, Environment, Participatory Action Research

Context

- The Portage la Prairie Planning District is in the process of creating what is known as a Secondary Plan and accompanying zoning by-laws for the southern shore of Lake Manitoba in the province of Manitoba, Canada.
- The area includes one of the largest wetlands in North America, as well as prime agricultural and grazing lands.
- The situation is complex and there are competing interests at stake. Consequently, creating a sound Secondary Plan requires a consultation process that engages multiple stakeholders in a meaningful way.
- Students from the University of Manitoba's Department of City Planning, 2008 Regional Planning Studio led the plan drafting process through the winter of 2008.



Questions

- Existing policies seek to balance future development with the conservation of sensitive natural environments in the planning area. How can we make these policies work well?
- What problems might people encounter with these policies?
- What is the level of support shown by stakeholders for specific policy directions?
- What changes and improvements can be made to the Secondary Plan?

Participants

First Consultation: 47 stakeholders including farmers, Hutterites, cottagers, residents, recreational users, fishers, landowners, councillors from the rural municipality and representatives of various provincial government departments.

Second Consultation: 75 visitors over the course of a day.

Third Consultation: Rural Municipal Council members.



Work in Progress
Photo Credit: Chris Baker



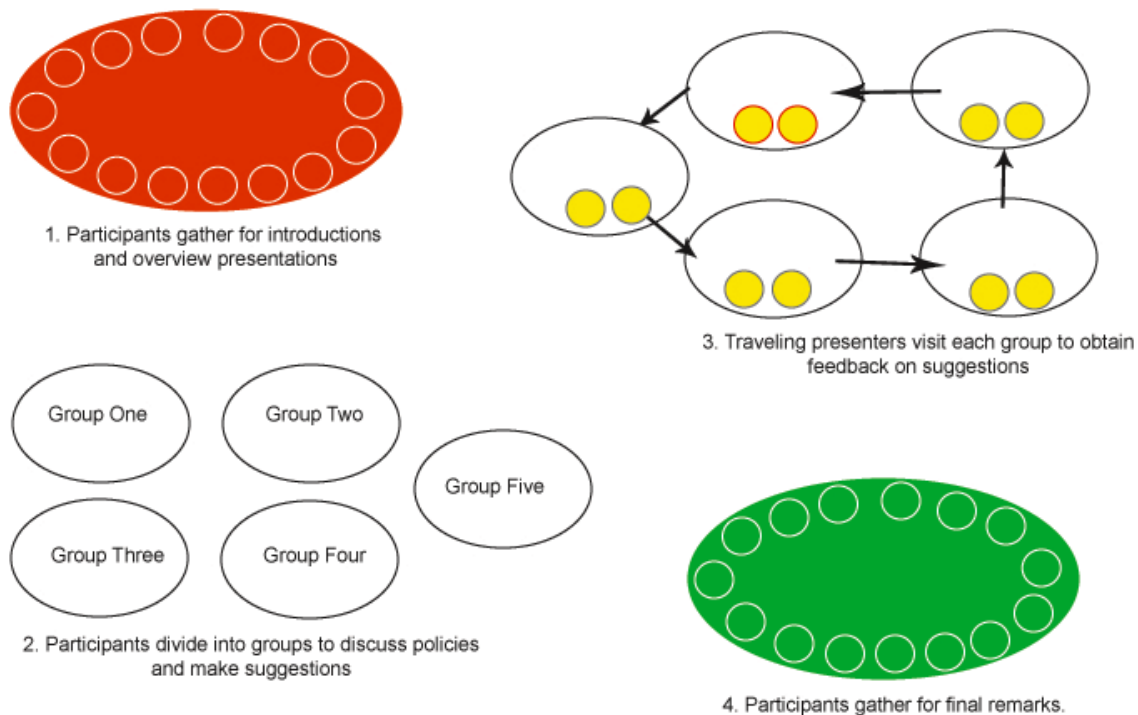
First Community Engagement, February 15, 2008
Photo Credit: Chris Baker

Tools

- Roman Carousel
- Open House
- Levels of support

Example of Results

- During the first community consultation, the **Roman Carousel** was used to gather input and perspectives from stakeholders on current policies guiding development in the area. Participants formed groups based on interests and discussed two of eight proposed policies.
- Written responses to guiding questions were gathered and discussed, leading to development of a group presentation on each policy.
- Representatives from each table then visited other tables to get additional feedback on the policies from those groups.
- Everyone had an opportunity to hear and comment on all policy discussions.



The discussions reflected awareness among participants about the importance and fragility of the South Basin. While generally supportive of the policies, participants made many suggestions about where and how the policies could be implemented so as to minimize specific impacts. Participant feedback also emphasized that the language of the policies needs to be clear and free of jargon if they are to be widely understood and gain support.

An **Open House** and assessment of **Levels of Support** were organized several weeks later. The goal was to present and gather feedback on specific policy directions proposed for the Secondary Plan. The policy directions were displayed on posters and people at the Open House indicated their level of support through ‘dotmocracy’ (placing a dot on a scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), and providing additional written and verbal comments. The policy directions presented at the Open House included:

- Agricultural land use (including zoning for manufacturing and wind-farm development)
- Residential land use
- Recreational opportunities
- Environmental protection

Policy directions were adjusted in light of both community consultations, and a draft Secondary Plan was presented to the Rural Municipal Council. Its feedback and suggestions were incorporated into subsequent drafts of the plan which is now in the final stages of review (October 2008).

Outcomes

- The community consultation provided opportunity for participants to share their hopes and concerns about the future of the area, and to raise contentious issues.
- Wind farm development in particular elicited strong opposition from some participants. This feedback led to additional research and fine-tuning of the zoning proposal.
- Intangible outcomes included consensus-building and formation of community ties between planners and community members.

SAS² Contributions

- People with very strong opinions on topics tend to dominate discussions in open meetings. Providing various opportunities for people to share their ideas through the Roman Carousel and Open House processes can help to reduce this tendency, at least to some degree.
- When using the Roman Carousel, take care to ensure the schedule of rotations is even and that the selected presenters are able to represent all views from their table.
- Further research using Levels of Support in land use planning would be useful, in order to discern how policies are shaped by community participants over time.